NFL: Chargers Pull the Plug on Broncos

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Tribune Wire Services

"I hope we never see this type of football again," moaned Denver coach Red Miller, after the San Diego Chargers rolled to a 23-0 NFL victory Sunday to hand the Broncos their first shutout in 48 regular season games.

Don Woods ran for one touchdown, Dan Fouts passed to Hank Bauer for another score, and Rolf Benirschke kicked three field goals, as the Chargers snapped a four-game losing streak and a seven-game Denver winning streak over San Diego.

Overall, the Chargers had possession for more than 45 minutes in completely dominating the defending AFC champs.

"They were up for the win," said Miller. "They won it fair and square. The fumbles and turnovers are what we usually capitalize on, but they used them on us."

It was the first victory for new Chargers coach Don Coryell, who celebrated his homecoming to San Diego Stadium, where he guided San Diego State to a 38-4-1 home record from 1967-72 before moving to the pros.

Denver's Craig Morton, who didn't complete a pass in seven attempts, said, "The Chargers outplayed us in every way. They are the best team we've faced all year."

Raiders 21, Oilers 17 — Ken Stabler capped a last-ditch 80-yard drive by hitting tight end Dave Casper with a four-yard scoring pass with 42 seconds remaining in the game at Oakland. The Oilers, helped by Earl Campbell's third 100-yard game of the season, were well in command in the third quarter with a 17-7 lead. They were driving for another score, when Campbell fumbled at the Oakland four-yard line, and Charles Phillips picked it up and returned it 96 yards for a Raider score, cutting the deficit to 17-14. The Raiders started their winning drive with 3:11 left, with Stabler completing five of seven passes for 67 yards on the march.

Cowboys 24, Giants 3 — When he saw New York coming out in a three-man line, Roger Staubach came out throwing in Dallas. He rifled three touchdown passes, two to Tony Hill, to run his NFC leading touchdown total to 12. The Cowboy defense, which has not allowed a touchdown in 11 consecutive quarters, sacked Giant quarterbacks eight times. But Dallas coach Tom Landry was still reserved after the rout, saying, "We haven't reached our Super Bowl level yet. We've got to learn to win the close games."

Bucs 30, Chiefs 13 — Doug Williams broke open a close 10-6 game in the fourth quarter in Kansas City by directing Tampa Bay on three scoring drives and firing a scoring pass himself. The once hapless Bucs are now 3-3 and have won five of their last eight regular season games. In handing K.C. its fifth straight loss, the Bucs held the Chiefs' wing-T offense to only 1?? yards, prompting Buc coach John McKay to remark, "You have to remember I played the wing-T back in the '50s and I'm not afraid of it at all."

Colts 30, Cardinals 17 — Two blocked punts and a 79-yard interception return for a TD by Lyle Blackwood helped Baltimore overcome a 343-222 St. Louis edge in total yards and hand Cardinal coach Bud Wilkinson his sixth straight loss. The blocked punts by Randy Burke and Lloyd Mumphord each set

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***Sports Mirror* by**

John Mooney

Tribune Sports Editor

In August, certain members of the Chicago baseball writing group carried on a bitter vendetta against Cub manager Herman Franks. And the minute after Notre Dame had lost to Missouri, Coach Dan Devine felt the pressure of the disappointed alumni who griped he hadn't won a national championship since January.

Dan Devine

Bob Commings, the embattled Iowa coach, has been under fire from segments of the Iowa alumni in recent years, but how would you like to be fighting for your job and hear your son cheered when he lay injured on the synthetic turf?

The crowd, segments of it, cheered when quarterback Bob Commings Jr. was felled. They didn't cheer him as he was helped from the field; they cheered when it was obvious he was hurt and would be replaced.

That's why I wonder why young men would choose the coaching or managing profession for a lifetime career.

The tough thing is not the attacks on the coach or manager, but the way such incidents affect his family.

Devine, of course, is no stranger to this sick form of persecution.

When he had coached the Green Bay Packers with not much success, Devine saw his house defaced, his dog shot, his daughter spat upon and rumors circulated about his family life.

His career at Notre Dame has been one of pressure, and a few years ago, one Notre Dame player explained, "We've won five out of six games, but our winning margins weren't enough for our fans who had bet on the games and given points."

A couple of years ago, after the Irish had scored 21 points in the last quarter to beat Air Force, Devine stood in the Irish dressing room and said, "When will all this pressure stop?"

The answer was, "When Devine brings Notre Dame a national championship."

Well, that happened when Devine and Notre Dame beat No. 1 Texas in the Cotton Bowl last January, but the pressure was off only from that date until the Irish lost their opener.

After he stepped out of coaching, the late Harry Stuhldreher worked for U.S. Steel and we became close friends.

Stuhldreher had felt the wrath of the fans in Wisconsin and "Goodbye Harry" signs were displayed across the student body section at the home games in Madison.

Later, he could laugh at the traumatic experience and he told a story to emphasize how adversity could bring a family closer together.

As Harry told the story, his oldest son, Skippy, came home from school where he was the star quarterback. In his hand was a newspaper suggesting Stuhldreher be fired and replaced by the two high school coaches from Madison East and Madison West.

Skippy was the star quarterback at the third high school, Central Catholic, and he was livid when he displayed the article. He also showed evidence of having been engaged in a scuffle.

Had Harry read this rag?

The coach-father felt a pang. He had been around long enough to feel the fan wrath and sometimes a vicious attack would make Mary cry, but now the kids were getting old enough to feel the pressure and hurt.

It was, Harry reasoned, time for a heart-to-heart talk with his son.

Yes, he told Skippy, he had read the article. It hadn't bothered him and he hoped it wouldn't bother the family. Skippy shouldn't let these things get under his skin. After all, it was a free country and who were they to say this fan didn't have a fair idea?

"But," Skippy protested fiercely, "Madison East and Madison West? Those bums! My coach at Central Catholic is the guy who should have your job."

Sportswriters, who normally are not paid as well nor have the security of a long-time contract, often come in for bitterness which might not be the same if the accuser faced the reporter and wasn't saved by the anonymity of an unsigned letter or a phoney name on his tirade.

I've told this made-up joke so long now people are re-telling it as eye-witness truth, but it probably serves as the anchor for this column.

Years ago, it was tradition at Utah State to salute the colors with the National Anthem and then "boo Mooney" for several minutes.

I took Betty to a basketball game years ago and on the way home I said I guessed I wouldn't bring her to any more games because it must be a shock to hear several thousand fans boo her husband.

But she added she'd like to come to more games and as for the boos, "I booed too."

Observation Ward

There is nothing that bolsters the individual's courage more than the anonymity of the crowd, the hate letter or the poison pen graffiti.

— Associated Press Laserphoto

"Here, take it if you want it," seems to be the cry of Chicago quarterback Bob Avellini Sunday, as he is jolted by Green Bay's Mike Butler in fourth quarter, knocking the ball loose. It was a long day for Avellini against revived Packers, who intercepted three of his passes in Green Bay.

Nuggets, Spurs: The ABA Years Revisited

By Lex Hemphill
Tribune Sports Writer

At least eight players who have played in ABA all-star games will be appearing in the University of Utah's Special Events Center Monday night at 7:30.

Some great names from the old ABA return to this old ABA city, when the Denver Nuggets and San Antonio Spurs, two survivors from the outcast league who made good in the NBA, play their last exhibition game here before opening the regular season against each other in Denver Friday.

The Nuggets bring in George McGinnis, Charlie Scott, and David Thompson, and they also have Dan Issel, who did not make the Nugget trip to Oklahoma City for Sunday night's game with Seattle and probably won't be here. The Spurs bring in James Silas, Billy Paultz, Larry Kenon, Louie Dampier, and, of course, George Gervin.

All of these players were ABA all-stars at one time or another, and so they should all be familiar faces to old Utah Stars followers. And naturally the two teams' coaches, the Nuggets' Larry Brown and the Spurs' Doug Moe, are ABA men from the heart.

Since the league dissolved in 1976, Brown, Moe and their players have been busy showing the NBA that their brand of basketball wasn't so laughable after all. In their years in the NBA, the Nuggets have won 98 games, lost 66, and won two division titles, while the Spurs have gone 96-68 with one division title.

They've been preparing in this pre-season to try to do even better. San Antonio, the NBA's hottest shooting team, has gone 6-1 in exhibition games, while Denver, after losing Sunday to Seattle 104-100, comes to Salt Lake City with a 4-3 record.

"As long as his leg holds up, he can be a valuable asset for us," says Spur coach Doug Moe about James Silas, the former ABA all-star who has been beset with injuries the past two years. "He's a good scorer and he knows how to play."

McGinnis, acquired from the 76ers in the off-season for Bobby Jones and Ralph Simpson, and Scott, picked up from the Lakers in the three-way trade that saw Darnell Hillman go to Kansas City and Ron Boone to Los Angeles, are the new faces on the Nuggets.

McGinnis, who will give the Nuggets the true power forward they have lacked, has scored 20 points in each of the last three Nugget games. Scott will lend leadership to the Denver backcourt. Brown is happy to have them both.

"The first thing McGinnis said when he got here was that he had seen that Denver won before he got here, and he wanted to be a part of it," said Brown over the weekend. "And I coached Charlie in college (at North Carolina when Scott was a freshman) and played with him a little. I've always felt he has great all-around skills."

Brown still has 13 men on his roster, and, since he has to get down to 11 by the Friday season opener, two of his players will be playing their last game for the Nuggets here Monday.

Brown has four guards (Thompson, Scott, Bob Wilkerson, and Robert Smith of UNLV), three centers (Issel, Kim Hughes, and Geff Crompton), and six forwards (McGinnis, Anthony Roberts, Bo Ellis, Tom Boswell, Rod Griffin, and Hollis Copeland).

"We might keep three centers because we have some flexibility at forward with Thompson and Wilkerson," said Brown. "We have a rookie center (Crompton) who has gotten down from 300 pounds to 268, and he's getting better and better. When you see a kid make that kind of commitment, you want to give him a chance."

That would seem to leave the weight on the four reserve forwards. Ex-Celtic Boswell scored 17 points Saturday night in a victory over Portland. Ellis is a second-year man from Marquette, while Griffin of Wake Forest and Copeland of Rutgers are rookies.

The Spurs, meanwhile, come to Salt Lake with 12 players. Ten of them played for the club last year, and it appears it will be one of the two new men — rookie forwards Frankie Sanders and Glen Mosley — whom Moe will have to cut before Friday.

One of the encouraging signs to the Spurs in the pre-season has been the play of Silas, once a prolific scorer before running into injury problems the last two years. He scored 21 points in the Spurs' last exhibition game, a 117-111 loss to Houston last Thursday.

"This year he'll be able to play 24 minutes at the most in a game," figured Moe. "But as long as his leg holds up, he can be a valuable asset for us. He's a good scorer and he knows how to play."

Paultz, who has been sharing the center spot with Mike Green, missed the Spurs' last two games with an achilles problem.

Frig Sees Good Things On Horizon for Eagles

By Dick Rosetta
Tribune Sports Writer

Len Frig admits he's only average in the predicting business, but even if the veteran hockey defenseman is only partly right on his assessment of the 1978-79 Salt Lake Golden Eagles, fans could be in for a treat the next seven months.

Frig was among the contingent of 29 players which filtered into Salt Lake over the weekend, preparing for the first, full-fledged Utah workout Monday at 1:30 p.m. at Hygeia under the guidance of coach Jack "Tex" Evans.

That the parent St. Louis Blues of the National Hockey League had a good training camp was evidenced by Frig's statement that "several of the guys here figure they had a good enough camp to make the big club. But the competition was tough and here we are."

Evans, whose last tour of duty in Salt Lake (1974-75) resulted in the regular season Central Hockey League crown and the Jack Adams Cup championship, will work his troops at Hygeia Monday and Tuesday with the first Salt Palace workout Wednesday at 1:30 p.m.

The Eagles roar into the 1978-79 CHL campaign Friday and Saturday with the Dallas Black Hawks at the Palace in 7:30 p.m. games.

One development over the weekend which affected the Eagles roster was the trade of defenseman Mike Kurney to the Montreal Canadiens organization so that St. Louis could ... center Gord McTavish. McTavish, a 6-1, 205-pounder, played four seasons at Nova Scotia of the American Hockey League.

Frig, who toiled for the Eagles most of last year, could say only glowing things about his 1978-79 teammates.

"We've got a couple of young French kids (Serge Menard and Jean Francois Boutin) who I swear could put the puck in the net with their eyes closed.

"And Rick Shinske (with the Eagles two years ago) had a super camp.

"Then," Frig continued, "you can count the veterans like Brian Ogilvie, Gary Holt, Floyd Thomson, Rick Bourbonnais and others and you have a great forward setup."

Frig really didn't need to dwell on his position—defense. Evans reported last week that the Eagles' defense appeared solid. Along with Frig, an eight-year pro, Salt Lake will be able to count on Gordon Buynak, Larry Hornung, Jack Brownschidle, Eagles of a year ago—and newcomers Gordie Gallant and amateur Kevin Willison.

"You know, Gallant has been an intimidator wherever he's gone and there's no reason to figure he'll change here," Frig said.

Frig said that goalies Terry Richardson and Rocky Menard, with a solid defense out front, should be among the best in the CHL.

If you really enjoy waxing your car, don't let Ming stop you.

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